

Korea

26 CHAPTER



Founded 1982

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History of Hand Surgery in Korea

Although Korea has a 1500-year-old history of oriental medicine, the modern concept of western medicine and surgery were not introduced until the late 19th century. In the early half of the 20th century, medical schools and affiliated hospitals were established one after another, and orthopedic or plastic surgery departments began to be separated from surgery departments. After the Korean War in 1953, Korea has made a rapid political and economic progress from a country impoverished by war. At that time, many new factories were built and many patients suffered from hand injuries but could not get proper care. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, orthopedic and plastic surgeons in several university hospitals were beginning to perform technically demanding hand surgeries, including replantation and mi-

crossurgery. They mostly had studied abroad or trained themselves with animals. In Seoul in 1982 some of these surgeons who were interested in hand surgery held an inter-hospital friendship meeting called "Scandinavian club", which had been named in commemoration of the Scandinavian nations that had donated in the post-war era a large amount of new medical equipment to the National Medical Center. These 19 surgeons established the Korean Society for Surgery of the Hand (KSSH) on October 29, 1982 (Fig. 1). Subsequently the KSSH became one of the sub-societies under the Korean Medical Association (KMA) in December 1982. The KSSH had its first scientific meeting in 1983 and continued to have congresses twice a year, once in the spring and once in the autumn. In 1987, a separate hand surgery society with mostly plastic surgeons was formed. This society, named the Korean Reconstructive Hand Surgery Society (KRHSS), also held annual congresses until 2003, when the two societies, the KSSH and the KRHSS, merged into one, the KSSH. In 2007, the KSSH had the 25th anniversary of its foundation and published its history book.

As of 2010, there are about 1,735 members in the KSSH, of which 240 are hand specialists with a board certificate. About 100 hand surgeons are mainly or solely treating patients with hand conditions and the rest of them perform hand surgeries part time.

The KSSH publishes "The Journal of Korean Society of Surgery of the Hand" four times a year. In 2002, the KSSH successfully held the 4th biennial congress of the Asian Pacific Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand (APFSSH) in Seoul. In 2010 the KSSH hosted the 11th triennial congress of the International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand (IFSSH) in Seoul.



대한수부외과학회
THE KOREAN SOCIETY FOR SURGERY OF THE HAND



FIG. 1 The KSSH entered the IFSSH is 1989.

Hand Training in Korea

One who wants to be an orthopedic or plastic surgeon enters a one-year intern program and then a 4-year orthopedic or plastic residency program after graduating from a medical school. Basic hand surgery skills can be learned during these residency programs. These residency programs are controlled by the Kore-



FIG. 2 Hands that prepare kimchi. A taste of Korean food comes from a flavor of mother's hand.



FIG. 4 A Gayageum, a twelve-stringed Korean harp requires delicate motion of hands.



FIG. 3 A Korean traditional dance with a fan.

an Hospital Association and the Ministry for Health Welfare and Family Affairs, which is responsible for quality control of all hospitals in Korea. After finishing the residency program and passing the board examination, one can practice hand surgery as a general, orthopaedic, or plastic surgeon either at a private clinic or at a hospital. If one wants to be a hand surgery specialist, one should join a hand surgery fellowship program of one or two years in the hospitals that are accredited for the fellowship training. After finishing the fellowship, one can apply for the hand surgery board examination and after passing the test, one can work as a hand surgery specialist with a board certificate. Hospitals that are permitted to have a hand surgery fellowship program are controlled by the KSSH, and have to submit hand-related patient records and educational programs to the KSSH every 5 years to maintain the accreditation.

Certification of Hand Surgery in Korea

In 2003, the Korean Orthopaedic Society (chairman, Moon Sang Chung) and the Korean Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons (chairman, Yoon Ho Lee) approved hand surgery as a subspecialty. Subsequently the Korean Society for Surgery of the Hand (KSSH) and the Korean Reconstructive Hand Surgery Society (KRHSS) merged into one the KSSH. Certification of hand surgery was closely related with this merger of the two Korean hand surgery societies in 2003.

In order to control the quality of hand surgeons and education, the unified KSSH began to work with a hand surgery specialist system in 2004. The KSSH specified qualifications for a hand surgery specialist and offered its first examination in 2005. The qualifications are such that an applicant should have practiced at least 4 years as a board-certified orthopedic or plastic surgeon, should be a member of the KSSH, should have finished at least one-year hand fellowship program that is approved by the KSSH, and authored papers regarding hand surgery and attended domestic or international hand surgery meetings. At the first examination, 195 young and old surgeons applied and 160 passed and became a hand surgery specialist. The examination is offered once a year and about 10 new surgeons are certified. As of 2009, there are about 240 certified hand surgery specialists in Korea.

Specialties that Perform Hand Surgery in Korea

Basically any doctor who has passed the test for medical doctor after graduating from a medical school can do any kind of surgery and claim the same fee as board certified surgeons



FIG. 5 The Gilt-Bronze Half-seated Contemplative Maitreya (national treasure No. 83) is comparable to The Thinker (French; Le Penseur) by Auguste Rodin.

for a given procedure. However, surgeries are performed usually by board-certified surgeons because patients tend to seek physicians with a specialty. Any orthopedic, plastic, or even neuro- or general surgeon can perform hand surgery. In recent years, most hospitals hire hand surgeons with more than a fellowship education and thus more and more patients with hand conditions are being treated by certified hand surgeons.

Pioneers of Hand Surgery in Korea and their Contributions

The late Byung Hoon Ahn, studied hand sur-



FIG. 6 Hands raising a cheer to a victory in the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup soccer games, which made all the Korean people patriotic.



FIG. 7 A calligraphy, a hand-write with brush gives us a peace of mind and strengthens a mental power.

gery at Oslo University in 1965, and was the Congress chairman of the 19th SICOT Meeting which was held in Seoul, Korea in 1993.

Ik Dong Kim who was a former president of the Kyungpook National University, was recognized for for the reconstruction of hands in lepers.

Young Ho Lee was one of the founding member of the KSSH and the first inaugural chairman of the KRHSS.

Hand surgery as one of the subspecialties of orthopedic surgery, was first introduced in Korea by Eung Shick Kang.

Kwang Suk Lee, was dedicated to microsurgery, especially the vascularized fibular graft.

Se Min Baek, a recognized microsurgeon, has been credited for designing the pectoralis major flap and lateral thigh flap.

Moon Sang Chung published the first Korean textbook on hand surgery, two volumes with 1,725 pages in 2005, and is currently the Congress president of the 11th IFSSH meeting.

Poong Taek Kim contributed to the cordial relationship between the KSSH and the Japa-

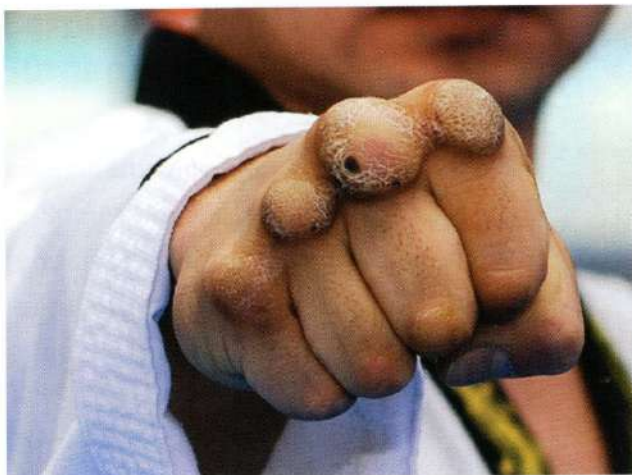


FIG. 8 A fist in Taekwondo. Taekwondo is a Korean art of self defense and is helpful in training one's body and sprits.

nese Hand Society, and he has been a strong proponent of endoscopic carpal tunnel release technique. Kwan Chul Tark was the Congress



FIG. 9 A sewing with a hand wearing a thimble that is a protector against a needle like a helmet.

chairman of the 4th APFSSH meeting in Seoul in 2002, and is internationally recognized for finger replantation.